

Appl. No. 09/923,009
Atty. Docket No. 8189
Amdt. dated December 8, 2003
Reply to Office Action of 09/30/2003
Customer No. 27752

REMARKS

Claims 5-10, 12-21, 34, 42 are pending in the present application, the fee for any additional independent claim above three (3) being submitted herewith.

Claims 1-4, 11, 22-33, 35-41 and 43 are canceled without prejudice.

Claims 5-7, 10, 14, 15, 21, 34, and 42 have been amended to be rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of their respective previous base claims and any respective previous intervening claims.

Claim 21 has been further amended to correct an inadvertent typographical error.

It is believed these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action states "Claims 5-10, 12-21, 34 and 42 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Claims 5-7, 10, 14, 15, 21, 34, and 42 have been amended as suggested by the Office Action. Due to their original dependency, Claims 8 and 9 now incorporate all the limitations of amended Claim 7; Claims 12 and 13 now incorporate all the limitations of amended Claim 10; and Claims 16-20 now incorporate all the limitations of amended Claim 15; and therefore are believed to be allowable without amendment.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a) Over US 5,290,496 in view of EP 0 830 927 A2

Claims 1-4, 11, 22-33, 35-41, and 43 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 5,290,496 in view of EP 0 830 927 A2. Claims 1-4, 11, 22-33, 35-41 and 43 have been canceled without prejudice.

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Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest effort to place their application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of Claims 5-10, 12-21, 34, and 42.

Respectfully submitted,
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